



Saskatchewan
Health Authority

Shrinkers

What You Need to Know



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saskhealthauthority.ca

Wearing shrinker socks

A shrinker is an elastic sock that is worn on the end of an amputated leg. It is commonly used after an amputation to:

- control swelling
- help you have less pain and phantom pain
- make your leg less sensitive
- shape your leg so it will fit a prosthesis
- keep your leg at the right size when you are not wearing your artificial leg

Care for your shrinker

Shrinkers come in different sizes. If you need a shrinker, your physical therapist measures your leg and order the right size for you. You need to wear a clean shrinker every day. You are given two shrinkers. With two shrinkers, you can wear one shrinker while the other one is being washed. Wash your shrinker by hand. Use a gentle, scent free, soap. Rinse it well and lie it flat to dry. If you need a new shrinker after you have left the hospital, you can call or go to the Saskatchewan Abilities Council.

Wearing your shrinker

Your therapist teaches you how to safely wear the shrinker and shows you how to put it on and take it off. At first, you may need help to put the shrinker on. With practice, you learn how put it on by yourself. The shrinker should fit snug on your leg and should not have wrinkles or creases. It should feel comfortable once it is on. If your leg starts to hurt or gets numb or tingly, take the shrinker off. Give your leg a short rest from the shrinker and then try wearing it again.

The goal is to wear your shrinker all day and all night long. Every 12 hours take your shrinker off for a few minutes. When the shrinker is off, check your leg to make sure the shrinker is not hurting you. If you see skin that is really red, warm, or hurt (blisters, scrapes, tears, bleeding, or leaking), do not put the shrinker back on. As soon as you can, ask your nurse or physical therapist to check your leg and shrinker. If your leg looks good when you check it, put the shrinker back on for another 12 hours. It might take time to get used to wearing a shrinker for this long. Be sure to wash your shrinker after you have worn it for a full day and night (24 hours). If you have problems with your shrinker when you are at home, stop wearing it and see your family doctor.

Steps for putting on a shrinker



Starting position
(pulling diagonally)



Alternate starting position
(pulling up and down or out
to the side)

- When you first start wearing your shrinker, you will likely need two people to put it on for you.
- As you start to get more mobile and your leg gets less painful or sensitive, you may be able to put the shrinker on yourself with no help.
- Begin by having the shrinker stretched out in all four directions.
- Slowly stretch the shrinker over the end of the leg and pull it up, making sure it does not catch on any scabs. Once it is in place, make sure it does not have any wrinkles (especially at the end).
- If you have staples, ask your nurse or therapist to cover them with a thin dressing before putting the shrinker on.



Below knee amputations shrinker being worn correctly



Above knee amputation shrinker being worn correctly



Taking a shrinker off



- Grab the shrinker by the sides at the open end (from the top).
- Slowly and gently pull the shrinker down.
- It will turn inside out as you pull it off.
- The shrinker should come off in a rolling motion and not pull on your skin.
- This is how you remove both above and below knee amputation shrinkers.

Images by SimpleSet — <https://simpleset.net>



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Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.

PIER—Patient Information and Education Resource

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